

**Drug Demand
Reduction
Program**

Did You Know?

Ecstasy

MAY 14

481-5998

What is Ecstasy? Ecstasy is a psychoactive stimulant. In fact, the term "ecstasy" does not refer to a single substance, but rather to a range of substances similar in chemistry and effects. It is usually distributed as a tablet or pill but can also be a powder or capsule. The tablets can be in many different shapes and sizes. Ecstasy is illegal. The Drug Enforcement Administration classifies it as a Schedule I drug, a description reserved for dangerous substances with no recognized medical use.



Mixed with alcohol, Ecstasy is extremely dangerous and can, in fact, be deadly. So widespread has been the harm of this "designer drug," that emergency room incidents have skyrocketed more than 1,200% since Ecstasy became the "club drug" of choice at all-night "rave" parties and dance clubs. Repeated use of Ecstasy ultimately may damage the cells that produce serotonin, which has an important role in the regulation of mood, appetite, pain, learning and memory. There already is research suggesting Ecstasy use can disrupt or interfere with memory.

What are the most common effects of Ecstasy: For most people, a "hit" of ecstasy lasts for 3 to 6 hours. Once the pill is swallowed, it takes only about 15 minutes for ecstasy to enter the bloodstream and reach the brain. About 45 minutes later, the person experiences ecstasy's "high." That's when the drug is at its peak level. People who use ecstasy might feel very alert, or "hyper," at first. Some lose a sense of time and experience other changes in perception, such as an enhanced sense of touch. Others experience negative effects right away. They may become anxious and agitated. Sweating or chills may occur, and people may feel faint or dizzy.

Ecstasy can also cause muscle tension, nausea, blurred vision, and increased heart rate and blood pressure. Forceful clenching of the teeth can occur, and individuals at clubs have been known to chew on pacifiers to relieve some of the tension. But it doesn't stop there. Even if a person takes only one pill, the side effects of Ecstasy—including feelings of sadness, anxiety, depression, and memory difficulties—can last for several days to a week (or longer in people who use ecstasy regularly).

Source of Information: DEA; NIDA; SAMSHA